

3rd MAY 2020 10am

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Lord Jesus Christ, whether in the quietness of my own resting place or in the busy storms of the day, amidst all the cares and joys of life, may I never feel forsaken or alone. Of your grace draw me entirely to yourself, now and forever. Amen. *Søren Kierkegaard*

CONFESSION

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, for turning away from you and ignoring your will for our lives. Father, forgive us, save us and help us.

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen.

COLLECT

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

PSALM 23

READINGS Acts 2: 42-end 1 Peter 2: 19-end John 10: 1-10

MINI-REFLECTION

In the days when there were sheep in the field outside Marksbury church, on a spring morning, light would stream through the east window (above) with its depiction of the Good Shepherd, and contented bleating could be heard outside. It was as calm and reassuring as Jesus' promise of safety for his sheep, his people. Today's readings share this theme, but safety is contrasted with the presence of 'the darkest valley', of enemies and danger: Jesus assures security for those who recognise and trust him. The early church believers gather together, and as in the psalmist's image of a prepared table, share meals in safety. In his first letter, Peter says 'through him you have come to trust in God' – as we can trust in Jesus' assurance of his dedicated care for his flock, for us.

PRAYERS

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in these uncertain times. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low, that we may rejoice in your comfort, knowing that nothing can separate us from your love, in Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.

We pray for those living in parts of the world which remain in danger of war, poverty or hunger. *A prayer from Christian Aid*: Lead our sisters and brothers out of the valley of the shadow of death to a place of still waters, green pastures and restoration. Amen.

We give thanks for the beauty of the natural world; for the warm weather which has given joy to so many people, and also for the rain which has nourished our fields and gardens. *A nineteenth century American prayer*: Oh the Lord's been good to me, and so I thank the Lord, for giving me the things I need – the sun, the rain and the appleseed; oh the Lord's been good to me! Amen.

WE SHARE THE GRACE……

THE LORD'S PRAYER (your chosen version)

FINAL PRAYER

May we see your glory, O God, in all your works; may we feel your presence in all circumstances and may we hold to you through times of good and ill; through Christ our Lord. Amen. *George Ridding*